United Nations

Daily Highlights

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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

+ Security Council unanimously extends mandate of United Nations Angolan Verification Mission until 30 April, authorizes concentration of deployment in Luanda with provision to deploy in other provincial locations; Special Representative to remain in Luanda; Council asks Secretary-General to submit further recommendations before 30 April 1993; meanwhile, meetings continued today in Addis Ababa with UNITA and Angolan Government

+ South Africa categorically denies allegations by Angolan Government that it is providing military support to UNITA.

+ Special envoy of President of Georgia asks for Security Council's assistance in resuming peace process in Abkhazia; Council to hold formal meeting tonight on the subject.

+ Security Council expresses concern over reports of Yugoslav vessels carrying oil from Ukraine to Serbia via Danube; says such shipments are "flagrant violation" of its mandatory sanctions against Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

+ Team sent to investigate allegations of widespread rape in former Yugoslavia finds "strong evidence" of rape committed on large scale during conflict.

+ Supreme National Council on Cambodia, meeting in Beijing, decides to hold elections to constituent assembly from 23 to 25 May; date for Presidential election not yet set, according to UNTAC spokesman.

+ Secretary-General calls for continued efforts to overcome obstacles to full implementation of Sea-law Convention.

+ Commission on Human Rights to begin forty-ninth session in Geneve on Monday, 1 February; to discuss state of human rights and fundamental freedoms in world today.

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The Security Council decided today to extend the mandate of the United Nations Angolan Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) for a period of three months, until 30 April, with a provision, based on security considerations, to authorize the Secretary-General to concentrate UNAVEM deployment in Luanda, and at his discretion, in other provincial locations. Under that provision, the Secretary-General would be authorized to keep a level of equipment and personnel, deemed appropriate, in one or two outstations in order to allow redeployment of UNAVEM II with a view to the resumption of its functions in accordance with "Acordos de Paz".

The Council took that action this evening by adopting unanimously resolution 804 (1993), under which it also decided to maintain the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Angola based in Luanda, with the necessary civilian, military and police staff. It asked the Secretary-General to submit to it as soon as possible, preferrably before 30 April 1993, a report on the situation in Angola together with his recommendations for the further role of the United Nations in the peace process.

By the resolution, the Council strongly condemned the persistent violations of the main provisions of the Peace Agreements, particularly the rejection by the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) of the election results and demanded that the parties cease fire immediately and restore a continued and meaningful dialogue.

The Council also strongly condemned attacks against UNAVEM II personnel in Angola, and demanded that UNITA and the Angolan Government take all necessary measures to ensure their safety and security.

In his report to the Security Council, dated 21 January, the Secretary-General had outlined three options for the future of the Mission and the related costs. The first option was to maintain the Mission at its current strength; the second was to reduce UNAVEM's provincial deployment to approximately six locations. The Council approved the third option - favored by the Secretary-General - which suggested the deployment, for three months, until 30 April, of 30 military observers, six police observers and 28 international civilian staff in Luanda, with the capability to provide support for the peace-keeping efforts of Margaret Anstee, Secretary-General's Special Reperesentative, if necessary. The deployment

Speaking before the vote, the Minister for External Relations of Angola, Venancio de Moura, said that, although it came late, his Government appreciated the "clear and unmistakable position taken by the international community, condemning the aggressive and militaristic actions of UNITA'S radical leadership". The Angolan people and its elected Government needed the support and understanding of the international community, and could not be treated at "the same level as a military party". The Angolan Government was a legitimate Government, he said. The result of international elections had

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been endorsed by the international community and the United Nations. That was why he was asking that UNAVEM II be allowed to stay in Angola and to work with the legal institutions in place there.

The Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, Yuliy Vorontsov, said he agreed with the Secretary-General's preferred option to concentrate UNAVEM II's presence to Luanda. He said he hoped that the meeting that had begun in Addis Ababa would result in an agreement.

The Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations, Edward Perkins, while urging the two parties to reach agreement, said the United States would continue to support UNAVEM II. However, he said, UNAVEM II and the countries concerned "cannot impose peace where the will for peace does not exist. Lasting peace is possible only when all Angolan, particularly the responsible leadership for the parties, reject the pursuit of power through violence".

Several speakers reflected that view saying that it was up the Angolans themselves to restore peace and promote national reconciliation in their country. However, they urged the United Nations to remain actively involved in Angola while there is any prospect for achieving a peaceful solution.

Meanwhile, Margaret Anstee, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Angola, informed the United Nations today that a formal agenda had been established during talks in Addis Ababa, which included the re-establishment of the cease-fire, the implementation of the peace accords, the role of the United Nations and the release of prisoners. Two commissions -- one military, the other political -- had been set up to deal with the issues.

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The Government of South African has categorically denied allegations by the Angolan Government that it was militarily supporting the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

In a letter to the Secretary-General, dated 27 January, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of South Africa, R. F. Botha, said the South African Defence Force (SADF) had submitted a report stating that it was not using military aircraft to supply UNITA.

On the contrary, he said, his Government had attempted to defuse the tension between UNITA and the Angolan Government and had consistently urged the two parties to implement the peace accords and accept the results of last September elections. South Africa would take stern action against any unauthorized activity such as flights over neighbouring States and would not hesitate to act upon any concrete evidence presented to it.

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The letter follows a request by Angola for an urgent meeting of the Security Council to discuss "the involvement of the South African Army in military action against the Angolan people and their elected Government, together with the UNITA forces".
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A Special envoy of President Eduard Shevarnadze of Georgia today told United Nations correspondents at Headquarters that his country had asked for the assistance of the Security Council to resume the peace process in Abkhazia.

The envoy, Alexander Kavsadze, said the Georgian President had asked the Security Council to call on all parties to the conflict to restore the 3 September agreement signed in Moscow by President Shevarnadze and President Boris Yeltsin of the Russian Federation. That agreement had called for a peaceful solution to the Abkhazian conflict by proposing that the military of the Russian Federation would disarm and expel from the conflict zone the armed Russian mercenaries.

The special envoy asked for the dispatch of a United Nations peace-keeping force into the territory of Georgia, along the Russian-Georgian border "in order to control and prevent the illegal flow of mercenaries and arms into the territory of Georgia". He also asked that a team of United Nations observers be sent to evaluate the conflict and make proposals for its resolution.

Mr. Kavsadse recalled that President Shevarnadze had sent a letter to the Secretary-General last December "evaluating the situation in his region and asking the Security Council to send peacekeeping forces to the area". He was now requesting that the Council call on the neighbours of Georgia not to interfere in its affairs. He warned that "the conflict had reached its climax" and there was an imminent danger that it may spill over the boundaries and "implicate other countries of the region and pose a threat to international peace and security".

The Security Council was scheduled to hold a formal meeting tonight on the situation in that country.

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The Security Council has expressed concern over reports of Yugoslav vessels carrying oil from Ukraine to Serbia by way of Danube, and has said such shipments are "a flagrant violation" of its mandatory sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

In a statement read out on behalf of the Council last night, its President, Yoshio Hatano of Japan, said the shipments had reportedly left Ukranian territory after the Council had specifically prohibited oil shipments

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to or from the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in mid-November 1992. Calling on the Government of Ukraine to halt such shipments, the Council deplored that "some of the vessels have already reached Serbia".

According to the statement, the Council President has been asked by Council members to convey their concern to the representatives of Romania and Bulgaria -- two neighouring States parted by the Danube river -- to remind them of their clear obligations under the Council resolutions and to seek an explanation of their failure to fulfil them.

In a separate development, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has protested the sanctions, saying they had adversely affected all sections of the population and particularly the 600,000 refugees from other areas of the region who, it said, had not received "even the minimum of relief aid from the world community".

In a letter to the President of the Security Council, dated 26 January, the Vice-President of the Yugoslav Republic, Radoje Kontic, pointing to the "disastrous implications" of the sanctions on the citizens of the Republic, said the Council had ignored the appeals of his Government for the alleviation of the sanctions.
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A team of medical experts sent to investigate allegations of widespread occurence of rape in the former Yugoslavia today reported that it found "strong evidence" that rape has been committed on a large scale during the conflict. Solid evidence was found that Croatian, Muslim and Serbian women were detained for extended periods of time and raped repeatedly.

On the basis of data collected and analysed by the experts, the team found that rape has been committed by combatants on all sides of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. However, the majority of the rapes have been committed against Muslim women of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, rape has been used as an instrument of "ethnic cleansing".

The experts emphasized, however, that while wide-ranging estimates of numbers of rape victims have been made, they could discern no reliable method of establishing such figures. The team was sent by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the territory of former Yugoslavia, Tadeusz Mazowiecki.

The team, which was composed of four medical experts and was accompanied by the Director of the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women as well as members of the staff of the Centre for Human Rights, visited Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia between 12 and 23 January.

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Further details and analysis, including observations and recommendations, will be included in the Special Rapporteur's forthcoming report to the Commission on Human Rights in February.

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Elections to the constituent assembly in Cambodia, under the auspices of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), will be held from 23 to 25 May, but the date for the holding of the Presidential election was still being "vigorously discussed," an UNTAC spokesman said today.

The agreement on dates for the elections to the assembly was reached at the meeting of the Cambodian Supreme National Council yesterday in Beijing. The meeting was attended by the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cambodia, Yasushi Akashi, and the Under-Secretary-General for Peace-keeping Operations, Marrack Goulding. Mr. Akashi would be returning to Phnom Penh tomorrow.

According to the spokesman, seven new rehabilitation projects worth about $25 million had been approved during the meeting. The next meeting of the Supreme National Council, which was scheduled to be held in Phnom Penh on 10 February, would be attended by Prince Norodom Sihanouk.

In a related development, the spokesman said, the UNTAC prosecutor had brought before the Phnom Penh Court yesterday a soldier of the National Aliance of Democratic Kampuchea (NADK), who was arrested in connection with the killing of 15 people on 27 December in a village in Cambodia.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has said that the Convention on the Law of the Sea was an achievement of the first order by the United Nations, "because it touches on an ever so essential part of human activities".

In a statement at the opening of informal consultations on the provisions of the Convention on the Law of the Sea governing the exploitation of the international seabed, the Secretary-General said it was the United Nations responsibility to see that it "enters fully into force" and becomes "the cornerstone of tomorrow's international maritime law".

He urged all delegations to redouble their efforts to overcome the difficulties to the full implementation of the Convention. "Our task is to review the elements of a comprehensive solution", the Secretary-General said.

The Convention on the Law of the Sea establishes a global regime for the seas and the oceans of our planet. So far a total of 54 States have ratified or acceded to the Convention. It needs a total of 60 ratifications to enter into force.

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The Commission on Human Rights will begin its forty-ninth session in Geneve on Monday, 1 February, during which it will discuss the state of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the world today.

The session, which will end on 12 March, is expected to deal with questions such as human rights violations in the occupied Arab territories and southern Africa, the situation in southern Lebanon, Cuba, Romania, Iraq, Albania, Afghanistan, Iran, Myanmar, Haiti, Equatorial Guinea, former Yugoslavia and East Timor. The question of human rights in Cyprus will also be considered, as well as measures to ensure the rights of migrant workers, detainees, minorities and children.

The Commission will also discuss the violation of the human rights of all persons subjected to any form of detention, imprisonment and torture, especially that of United Nations staff members. Enforced or involuntary disappearances, human rights and states of emergency, the independence of the judiciary , hostage-taking, the right of a fair trial will be themes among others.

The Commission was established in 1946 by the Economic and Social Council and is regarded as the principal policy-making organ in the field of human rights within the United Nations system.

Since 1992, the Commission has been authorized to meet exceptionally twice a year to consider particularly grave human rights situations, provided that a majority of its members so decide.

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